the fiscal year 2005-06 as against only 8 per cent recommended by the EPF board;

(b) if so, what steps were taken to find additional resources to restore the EPF rate of interest to 9.5 per cent such as the Special Depository Scheme; if so, with what result; and

(c) the reaction and response to the Labour and workers' Organisations to this decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) The Government has notified the rate of interest on Employees Provident Fund for the year 2005-06@ 8.5%.

(b) and (c) The interest rate of 8.5% has been declared after taking into consideration the earnings of the Employees Provident Fund for 2005-06 and certain other internal resources.

References/representations have been received from Labour Unions and their organizations, protesting against reduction of interest rate.

Dues on Corporate Houses in respect of EPF

376. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of Employees Provident Fund arrears due to various corporates till date; and

(b) what special efforts are being made to recover the arrears from defaulters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) The amount of arrears outstanding as on 30.09.2005 was Rs. 2,429.97 crore.

(b) The actions taken against the defaulters include prosecution under Section 406/409 of IPC, attachment of movable/immovable property and arrest of defaulters.